

The Fitz Files



PETER

Bitter whine a case of sour

MEMO to the Coalition and their carpet-biting-mad supporters: get a grip! We had an election. On a two-party preferred basis it was close – 50-50 close. In the horse-trading that followed, Julia Gillard appears to have traded a tad better and was able to form a government with the support of the Greens and independents. This was not: corrupt; an abrogation of the duty of the independents to support the choices of the denizens of talk-back; a gaping wound on the otherwise pristine face of democracy. It is simply the way of the Westminster system. As to the carry-on over who got more votes, Kim Beazley won 51 per cent of the popular vote in 1998 and still didn't form a government. Were the same people screaming now, screaming then?

But the carry-on has been staggering. It was led by the embarrassing hyperbole of Andrew Robb who said he found it "almost inconceivable that the country independents would back a Labor-Green coalition", but if it were to happen it would do nothing less than "destroy Australia". Gee, really? Surely the way forward for the Coalition is to show some grace – look it up, Alan – and just get on with it, instead of squealing like stuck pigs that it is unfair, *unfair*, so UNFAIR!

How tweet it is

AS TO the vilification last week of Rob Oakeshott, that, too, has been as unedifying as it has been ludicrous. He was presented with a difficult decision and he made it, after what was obviously a lot of soul searching. The only issue was the time it took him to announce it. It was perhaps Tracy Grimshaw who said it best, when she tweeted during his 17-minute speech: "Dear PM, Please don't make Rob Oakeshott Speaker. He may take it literally." She followed it up a few minutes later with "Just ducked out to read *War and Peace*. Has Oakeshott announced yet?" OK, OK, so he did take a long time to get to the point, but for what it's worth ...

On a mission

'MEMBER when that famous old church on Broadway – St Barnabas,

burnt down four years ago? The one that used to always have the amusing exchanges on its notice-board with the pub over the road?

"Jesus bowled over death" was met with "And Lillee bowled overarm."

"This church is only for sinners" received the reply, "This pub is only for drinkers."

"Money does not make you happy," was met with "I'd rather be rich and happy than poor and happy." And so on.

Well, they're finally starting to rebuild it. The church has been a part of the fabric of Sydney for more than 150 years. It was built by a rogue English evangelist in what he described as "the worst place in the colony" and it was later the church of Arthur Stace, otherwise known as "Mr Eternity". Anyhoo, on

Saturday, as part of its fund-raising, the church is holding its inaugural Seven Churches Walk to raise money for the rebuilding. See www.barneys.org.au

Quote of week

LAWYER Geoffrey Robertson, QC, in his new book, *The Case of the Pope: Vatican Accountability for Human Rights Abuse*: "The incidence of clerical sexual abuse of children is much higher than has previously been understood – tens of thousands – probably up to a hundred thousand children have been molested by priests since 1981 ... This scandal has come about because [the church] under Cardinal Ratzinger [the present Pope], insisted that all child abuse

allegations be dealt with under 'pontifical secrecy' provision canon law."

Hidden truths

MEANWHILE, on the sporting the most amazing yarn of the belongs to Brendan Fevola, the bad boy whose most infamous appalling act in a long litany of was to take a photo of his then ner, Lara Bingle, in the shower against her will, and then allegedly send it on to his mates. (I know I know, precisely the kind of thing where one can't help but think good thrashing might actually be the situation.)

Last week it was alleged that he exposed himself to a mother of Fevola denies the allegation.



MORAL DILEMMA LESLIE CANNOLD

The tribe has spoken woe betide those y